

mination for the first time records the gratifying fact that substantial progress has been made in English composition and grammar. The Secretary of State has also called my attention to the necessity of dealing with the poor children who are sometimes seen running about the streets of this Colony of a class socially lower than those at home as before me. Little children who cannot afford to pay any school fees, and whose education should be attended to, are called "ragged boys." When the late Mayor was in England he suggested at that time, in a report, at one or two what are called ragged schools.

about where these little children could be located. To that scheme there were various objections. The first is the difficulty of carrying

appointed a considerable time ago a Commission upon the Central School with a view of ascertaining the opinion of the Commissioners for the Government, as to the possibility of having in the Colony an institution of a somewhat collegiate character, where Chinese youths whose parents would be prepared to pay the expenses, could receive a first-class education in English literature and sciences, and thus, as I can judge, the Chinese themselves, as wealthy ratapayers, are very anxious to see an institution of the kind established. I have, therefore, the honor to inform the Commission I shall consider it with an earnest desire to carry out a scheme which will elevate a school as it were, or a portion of the school, to the level of a collegiate institution. I am, until I have the report of the Commission, of the evidence taken by the Commission, I can make no definite opinion on the subject. On the whole, I have the greatest hopes, of the gratification you begin with, or he apprehends, of Mr. Wright, and, secondly, on the result of the report of Mr. Falconer's labors during the past session (Aplause).

Mr. WATKINS:—Your Excellency, it is now my pleasant duty to express the thanks of the masters, English and Chinese, of this school, to your Excellency for coming on this occasion and for the interest you have taken in the school, and the future prospects of the school. I may add as my own personal thanks to your Excellency the manner in which you have spoken of me in this meeting. I may also add the thanks of the school, and of the Chinese, for the fact that you have kindly assisted by their presence on this occasion.

His EXCELLENCY then announced that the Chinese Government had sent him the 1st of July, a copy, then he hoped the scholars would enjoy them.

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE IN HONGKONG.

About half-past seven o'clock on the 20th of January, a tremendous fire broke out in the enormous volume of smoke was seen issuing from the godowns in the occupation of Messrs. J. J. Remondet and Co. immediately beyond the premises of the Craysa here situated. The fire was caused by the fact that the godowns were stored a large quantity of matches, camphor, and cotton, and before any one could reach the spot the whole of the contents were consumed. It seems that the matches, as the carriages full of matches by coolies who were smoking while repacking camphor in the factory, were between the two godowns. There is a narrow alleyway between the two godowns, and the fire had hardly caught before it spread throughout both buildings, and they were soon mass

A small hand engine from the Wanchai station was the first on the spot, and the Fire Insurance Companies' steam engine and the Government

As 2 and 3 steamers quickly followed, as well as various boats. There was no difficulty in getting an ample supply of water from the tanks and the cargo goods were being saved. The burning mass from that side, and a hose was also led through from the merchant in Queen's read. Detachments of men from the Royal Irish Militia Fusiliers, the Gloucesters, and the French frigate *Thémis* were sent to the burning mass, and the people who kept the crowd back and preserved order. There was great danger of the fire spreading to the adjoining houses, and the work of the windows of the easternmost of the houses was being done. The danger was there was soon put out, and the flames were likewise entirely to the godown, and the backs of the small houses in front of them. The occupants of the houses, however, were ordered to their furniture to the passages, and to their furniture to the passages, and to be removed by water. The most eastern of the Blue buildings was occupied, the ground floor by Lieutenant Adams, the first flat by Lieutenant Barclay, and the top flat by Captain Speechley, and the second flat by Captain Barclay, and the third flat by Captain Barclay, and the fourth flat by Captain Barclay. Snelling. None of these parties, we believe, were injured. The ample stream of water flowing on to the fire kept the flames well in check, but with the inflammable nature of the burning goods it is impossible to say whether there was nothing left to burn. A little later two o'clock the No. 1 Government engine, which has been for some time under repairs, was brought up and largely augmented the stream of water playing on the fire, but shortly afterwards the No. 2 engine broke down, the working of the boiler giving way. Soon after two o'clock the No. 3 engine and the hand one

thing but a smouldering mass lying on the floor—breaking out at times into flames here and there—on which water was kept

The buildings were entirely gutted, and all their contents destroyed. The loss, we understand, is covered by insurance in the local and home offices. The buildings were the property of the Atle de la Sainte Enne. The scene of the fire was visited by a great number of people and large crowds viewed it from an unimpeded road. There was no timely great uppouring of the flames, but the volume of smoke was so great that it was a perfect wall of smoke and over the eastern part of the town and rolled upwards partially obscured the Peak. The flames from the burning camphor and materials rose very strong and made themselves felt at a considerable distance. The quantity of material stored in camphor stores in the buildings was immense, and the fire continued to smoulder away and send up volumes of smoke for several days, notwithstanding the large amount of water kept spraying upon it. The smouldering mass has been kept burning for several days, and the smoke continues, but the work is not yet completely finished. The services of the Fire Brigade are no longer required. Amongst the property destroyed was a large stock of fine old port, belonging to the late Mr. de la Sainte Enne, and many other things. Chinese sustained injuries by the force of a beam. The fire took eight days to subside.

HONGKONG.

The past fortnight has been more painful than usual, but with meetings of the Council, &c. &c. The Annual Exhibition of the Hongkong Horticultural Society took place in the Public Gardens on the 14th and 15th inst., in connection with which a Poultry Show was also held.

nt Central School took place on the 10th
t., when His Excellency the Governor pre-
ed.

A telegram received on Friday from Shanghai announces that the river at Tientsin is open and that the steamers will leave Shanghai for the North tomorrow.

The steamer *Jappa*, which left here on the 14th inst. for the Straits and Calcutta, had amongst its passengers Lady Hennessey and Mr. Clerely, Deputy Surveyor-General for the Colony.

It is notified in the Gazette of this date that the late Mr. W. H. Murray has been sold to Sze Sang Kai Wan Hin Seng, for one year from the 1st of March 1893 to the 25th of February 1894, for a sum of \$210,000.

We regret to have to record the sudden death of Mr. Thomas Marr at his house in Shelley-street, last night, at the age of 44. Mr. Marr was employed on the engineering staff of this port, and

